

LEAFY GREENS MARKETING AGREEMENT SETS COMPLIANCE AUDIT START DATE

SACRAMENTO, July 6, 2007 – The California leafy greens industry has set July 23rd as the date when mandatory food safety audits of its members will begin. Acting at its board meeting in Santa Maria on Friday, June 29th, the California Leafy Green Products Marketing Agreement (LGMA) unanimously approved a start date for mandatory compliance audits of its members, and finalized other key aspects of its program, LGMA Chairman Joe Pezzini has announced.

"The steps we are taking are part of our industry's unprecedented commitment to food safety," said Pezzini. "Beginning July 23rd, we will begin to certify to our customers that California lettuce, spinach and other leafy greens have been grown to the highest food safety standards available."

Along with setting July 23rd as the start date for mandatory compliance audits, the board has opened up the sign-up period for membership in the marketing agreement for the rest of the year. "We continue to hear from industry members who want to join the Marketing Agreement," said Scott Horsfall, CEO of the LGMA. "As this is a new organization, and in the interest of food safety, we decided to open up membership for the rest of this fiscal year."

The Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement was formed in response to the E. coli outbreak that was linked to California spinach last year. The marketing agreement represents approximately 99 percent of the leafy greens industry in California, and requires of signatories that they implement and maintain the highest standards of safety in growing and handling spinach, lettuce and other leafy greens.

Media Contact: Steve Lyle, Director of Public Affairs - 916/654-0462
Scott Horsfall, CEO, Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement - 916/441-1240

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